

BQC - 91 - 047

Date: July 22, 1991

To: Nursing Homes
Facilities for the Developmentally Disabled

NH 21
FDD 9

From: Larry Tainter, Director
Bureau of Quality Assurance

Subject: Revised HCFA Guidelines for Antipsychotic Drug Use in LTC

The Health Care Financing Administration has recently distributed revised guidelines for antipsychotic drug use in long-term care facilities. These guidelines are to be used by state survey staff to help determine whether or not a facility is in compliance with the federal regulations at 42 CFR 483.25(1) (2) (I) & (ii) related to antipsychotic drug use in long-term care facilities.

In order to keep you apprised of the revisions in the federal guidelines related to antipsychotic drug use, a copy of the federal interpretive guidelines is enclosed. In brief, changes have occurred as follows:

- The defining features of "organic mental syndromes", for which an antipsychotic drug may be given, were amended to include behavior characterized by "Continuous crying out, screaming, yelling or pacing if these specific behaviors cause an impairment in functional capacity and if they are quantitatively (e.g., periods of time) documented by the facility."
- The behaviors of "Simple pacing" and "Crying out, yelling or screaming" were eliminated as behaviors for which an antipsychotic should not be used.
- A guideline was added indicating that "PRN antipsychotic drug orders should not be used more than five times in any seven day period without a review of the resident's condition by a physician."
- In relation to gradual dose reductions, a guideline which stated that "At a minimum, a resident with a stable condition should be tapered (after no more than and possibly less than six months of therapy) at a maximum of 25% (approximately) of the initial dose per month" was deleted.
- Survey procedures and probes were replaced with surveyor instructions directing surveyors to allow facilities the opportunity to provide a rationale (beyond "the doctor ordered it") for using antipsychotic drugs which are prescribed contrary to the HCFA guidelines.

If you have questions related to these guidelines, please contact your Field Operations Manager or Bonnie Landgraf, Nurse Consultant, at (608) 266-6691.

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cc: -BQC Staff	-Minnesota State Agency	-Comm. on Aging, Ext. Care Fac./HH
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